

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph starting on p. 14, line 24 with the following amended paragraph:

A first embodiment of the present invention, in which reduced processing is required within the packet-based conference bridge compared to well-known conference bridge designs, is now described with reference to FIGURES 4, 5, 6A and 6B. In this embodiment, speech indication signals are sent from the packet-based terminals 22,242 24,26 within the voice conference to the packet-based conference bridge 28 so that no speech detection operation needs to be performed within the conference bridge itself. In one implementation, these speech indication signals simply indicate if a participant corresponding to a particular packet-based terminal is speaking or not. In other implementations, the speech indication signals indicates other parameters that could be utilized by a talker selection algorithm to select a set of the packet-based terminals as talkers. For example, in one implementation, the parameters within the speech indication signals correspond to the energy level of the speech associated with the participants at the particular packet-based terminals.

Please replace the paragraph starting on p. 33, line 12 with the following amended paragraph:

FIGURE 9 is a functional block diagram illustrating the modified operations performed within the inputting apparatus 50 and the decompression unit 52 for the situation that primary and secondary talkers are transmitting voice data packets to the packet-based terminal simultaneously. As depicted in FIGURE 9, voice data packets from the primary and secondary talkers are input to respective protocol stacks 120 which are further coupled in series with respective jitter buffers 122 and decompression blocks 124. The decompressed outputs from the decompression blocks 124 are input to a mixer 126 that generates a mixed voice signal to be output to the D/A converter 54. In operation, the protocol stacks 120 remove the packet overhead from the received voice data packets and output voice signals in compressed format. The jitter buffers ~~72~~ 122 operate to ensure that the voice signals are within the proper sequence (i.e. time ordering voice signals) and to buffer the voice signals to ensure smooth playback. The decompression blocks 124 decompress the voice signals such that they are preferably in PCM format and the mixer 126 operates to mix the decompressed voice signals together using well-known techniques.